

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT

OF

KATHLEEN M. WALTON

FOR

MARKETING APPARATUS AND METHOD

Send Correspondence To:

**Robert S. Lipton, Esquire
Lipton, Weinberger & Husick
201 North Jackson Street
P.O. Box 934
Media, PA 19063-0934
610-566-6000**

MARKETING APPARATUS AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

5 The Invention is an apparatus and method for marketing heartbreak products.

Description of the related art

At its most abstract and clinical, grief is a complex suite of physiological and emotional responses resulting from a change in a familiar pattern or behavior.

Grief is inevitable and universal. In one way or another, we all will suffer from
10 grief. As used in this application, the term 'heartbreak' means the emotional and physiological response of grief of whatever kind and of whatever cause.

Grief is characterized by loss. A person may grieve the passing of a human life. A person may experience the same emotional turmoil over the death of a personal relationship, the loss of a job, the loss of an item of property, the
15 temporary absence of a loved one or the loss of a pet. A person may grieve the loss of a physical or of a mental ability or a loss during a competition. A person may grieve the changes brought about by surgery or other medical condition.

A grieving person may experience multiple conflicting or compounding emotions vying for the person's attention at the same time. The emotions of grief
20 may be intense, disorganizing and long lasting. The distinction between the emotional upheaval caused by grief and a similar emotional upheaval caused by mental illness may be vanishingly small. Conversely, the degree of emotional upheaval caused by grief may vary enormously from one person to the next and among situations. No one would deny the grief experienced by a parent at the loss

of a child. The grief experienced by a twelve-year old at being excluded by her peers is no less real and may be no less intense.

Expressions of empathy and sympathy from others may be of benefit to the grieving person. While no expression by a bystander can cause the grieving person to stop feeling the emotional turmoil of grief, expressions of support and sympathy may allow the grieving person to experience hope beyond the grief and may help to avoid a residue of depression left in the wake of the grief.

Summary of the Invention

The Invention is an apparatus and method of marketing products for persons who are grieving, particularly persons who are experiencing the heartbreak of the end of a romantic relationship or experiencing the heartbreak associated with the absence of a loved one. The products may be purchased by persons wishing to make a gesture of support for the heartbroken person or may be purchased by the heartbroken person as a special treat and self-acknowledgement of the pain the person is experiencing. The products comprise a selection of age and gender appropriate products such as comestibles and personal care products, books of personal affirmations and other items that may offer support and comfort for the heartbroken person.

The Invention is organized as a selection of suites of products, categorized by age and gender-appropriate content. The suite of products may be selected to be appropriate to the nature of the particular loss being mourned.

To practice the Invention, a user will utilize a client computer. The user will obtain access to a server computer over a network, such as the Internet. The

client computer, and hence the user, will be presented with a menu of suites of products categorized based upon the age, gender and content specific to common grief-inducing situations. The user may select among the menu of suites of products. The user may order the suite of products and have the suite of products delivered to the grieving person.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of the Invention.

Fig. 2 is the first part of a two part flow chart of the Invention.

Fig. 3 is the second of a two part flow chart of the Invention.

Fig. 4 is a block diagram of the menu of the Invention.

Detailed Description of an Embodiment

As shown by Fig. 1, a user 2 utilizes a client computer 4 connected to a computer network 6. The computer network 6 may be a local area network 6 or a wide area network 6, such as the Internet. The client computer 4 communicates with a server computer 8 through the network 6. For the purposes of this application, a client computer is any computer capable of connecting to a server computer 8 over a network 6. For purposes of this application, a server computer 8 is any computer capable of connecting to a client computer 4 over a network 6. The server computer 8 is operated under the control of the vendor 10 and communicates with the vendor 10.

Figs. 2 and 3 comprise a flow chart consisting of two figures. As shown by Fig. 2, the user 2, who may be the person who is heartbroken or another person who wishes to offer the heartbroken person support, connects a client computer 4

to the network 6. The user 2 directs a query to the server computer 8. In response to the query by the client computer 4, the server computer 8 transmits a menu as shown by Fig. 5 to the client computer 4, which displays the menu to the user 2.

5 From Fig. 5, the menu comprises several categories from which the user 2 may choose. The categories are selected by the vendor 10 so as to reflect the expected circumstances of the heartbroken person, whether or not the heartbroken person is also the user 2. For example, the categories (designated in Fig. 5 as example categories A, B and C) may discriminate among adult women, college-age
10 women or teenage girls. The categories may reflect gender differences by establishing separate categories for boys or adult men. The Invention contemplates any number of categories.

 The categories may reflect the grounds for a loss giving rise to heartbreak. For example, a category may address the heartbreak caused by the end of a
15 romantic relationship. Alternatively, a category may address heartbreak caused by the loss of a pet or the death of a loved one. A category may address heartbreak caused by temporary separation, such as the heartbreak felt by those left behind by a soldier going off to war.

 The categories may address adult content themes. The categories also may
20 address the anger that a grieving person also may feel by providing products allowing an outlet for that anger.

 The products under each category are organized into separate suites of products by price, with each suite including several products. For example, a

category directed to adult women heartbroken by the end of a romantic relationship may include the following suites of products, in decreasing order of price:

First suite of products: a candle, a meditation CD, a chocolate bar cc, bath gel, a bath puff, a pedicure set, a spa kit, a self-help book on ending a relationship and candies. Second suite of products: a candle, a chocolate bar, bath gel, a bath puff, a pedicure set a spa kit and candies. Third suite of products: a candle, a chocolate bar, bath gel, a bath puff, a pedicure set and candies. As can be seen from the above example, the higher-priced suites of products include more products than the lower-priced suites.

The products selected for the suites of the age-specific categories are selected to be appropriate to that age group. For example, a suite of products designed to appeal to a heartbroken 10 to 14 year old girl may include the following: lip gloss key chain, glitter hair mascara, glitter nail polish, smiley pen, body glitter, glitter compact, a hair barrette, a plush bear, a chocolate bar and candies.

The products chosen for the gender-specific categories are selected appropriate for the gender. For example, for a suite of products intended to be purchased by a male friend seeking to provide support for a male grieving the end of a romantic relationship, the products may include the following: a cigar, a shot glass with adult images, a hangover kit, cologne, a chocolate bar and candies.

The products chosen for the categories of products also may reflect the cause of the heartbreak. For example, categories of products may be selected to aid a family member grieving the temporary absence of a soldier leaving for war. A

suite of products in this category may include items such as: a candle, an American flag pin, aromatherapy spray, dream pillow, a relaxation CD, an American flag, a flag-theme plush bear, a chocolate bar and candies.

Once the user 2 selects the category appropriate for the heartbroken person, the user 2 communicates the category to the client computer 4, which in turn communicates the category to the server computer 8. The server computer 8 transmits the selected category of products to the client computer 4, where the products are displayed to the user 2. The user 2 may instruct the client computer 4, and hence the server computer 8, to display to the user the products contained in the selected suite of products.

Upon display of the suite of products, the user 2 may elect to purchase the suite of products. Conversely, the user 2 may elect to view and to purchase some other suite of products or no products at all. To purchase the suite of products, the user 2 provides appropriate instructions to the client computer 4, which then communicates with the server computer 8. The server computer 8 prompts the client computer 4, and hence the user 2, through a series of screens eliciting payment information and information as to where the vendor 10 will deliver the suite of products. Upon receipt and confirmation of the credit card information, the vendor 10 delivers the suite of products as directed by the user 2 and receives payment from the user's 2 credit card service provider, completing the transaction.

Although this invention has been described and illustrated by reference to specific embodiments, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications may be made which clearly fall within the scope of this

invention. The present invention is intended to be protected broadly within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.